

The Circuit Library System 03/19/2007

The Fifth Circuit Library System supports the information needs of the federal judges in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and their staffs. To a lesser extent, the library also supports the information needs of the practicing federal bar in those states. The library system is composed of one headquarters library in New Orleans and ten satellite libraries located in Baton Rouge, Lafayette, and Shreveport, Louisiana; Gulfport and Jackson, Mississippi; and Austin, Beaumont, Brownsville, Houston, and San Antonio, Texas. Thirteen staff members are in New Orleans and twelve staff members are located in satellite libraries.

Who are our customers?

- Judges- circuit, district, bankruptcy, and magistrate
- Law clerks- elbow and pro se
- Staff attorneys
- Clerks of court and their staff
- Circuit executive and staff
- Judges and librarians from other circuits
- Probation offices
- Pretrial services offices
- Federal public defender offices
- Lawyers with cases before the court, other local and out-of-town attorneys
- Employees of other federal and state agencies
- Pro se litigants and the general public

It is important to remember that services detailed throughout this document are provided to all of the court offices mentioned above.

The Work of the Library

Library work in general is divided into two departments, Public Services (reference) and Technical Services (subscriptions, cataloging, and bill-paying). In New Orleans, the public services staff as well as the Circuit Librarian, the Deputy Circuit Librarian, and the office administrator are located on the main floor of the library. The technical services staff is located on the mezzanine area of the building. Satellite librarians perform both public services and technical services duties, as noted below.

Public Services

Types of Public Services Provided

- **Research and Reference-** the library staff, both at headquarters and satellites, provides general and in-depth legal and non-legal research for all court customers. This research can occur in books, law reviews, microforms, on Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis, via the internet, or through person-to-person interviews. The questions can arrive in person, over the phone, or by e-mail. One of the library's overriding policies is that we make every effort to answer the patron's questions. Except in very unusual circumstances, we do not believe in handing off the call to another office. It is our job to locate the information and call the customer back with the answer. The staff also compiles federal and state legislative histories upon request, and tracks down any material that is mentioned in

briefs before the court. Information is usually provided as photocopies, faxes, or documents attached to e-mails. Materials used in research are sometimes retrieved from local university or public libraries. Often staff will interface with district court Pacer systems to access lower court docket information. For non-court staff, the librarians provide simpler research aid and basic instruction. This usually involves deciphering what the real question is, directing the patron to the appropriate material, and showing the patron how to use it. Public access computers are available, providing access to the online catalog, cd-roms, and the internet. Starting in 2005 the library tracks numbers and types of reference interactions via the circulation module of the integrated library system.

- **Publications-** the Reference Librarian produces the library's electronic newsletter, although the entire staff contributes. The public services and satellite staffs also publish research guides, pathfinders, bibliographies, union lists, the Guide to Library Services, and other current awareness materials. These documents are available via the library's web site. Individually targeted publications can be created for court staff upon request, i.e. as for training sessions.
- **Online Services-** the public services staff and satellite librarians administer the CALR program (Westlaw and Lexis). We obtain passwords, software, documentation, and coordinate vendor-sponsored training. We can also provide individualized training and advice on how to use the various CALR products, including Westlaw.com, Lexis.com, HeinOnline, Digital Congressional Serial Set, Law Library Microform Consortium Online, Central Solutions, and ProQuest Historical Newspapers. The circuit library also monitors billing statements and compiles usage statistics for the above products.
- **Internet and Intranet-** The library is also a key player in developing and maintaining the circuit's internet and intranet web sites. The library systems manager designs and maintains the library's internet and intranet web pages as well as the court's internet home page. The staff assists in providing content for the home page and designing interfaces. We also provide advice on how to evaluate the content and validity of specific internet sites. We can pilot internet information sites to determine their suitability for court use.
- **Interlibrary Loan-** Both the public services staff and all satellite librarians provide interlibrary loan services for their customers. When a judge, law clerk, or other court employee needs some material that the headquarters or satellite library does not own, the librarian locates that material and borrows it. Sometimes this is done at a local level, by actually visiting a nearby university, law firm, or public library and borrowing the needed materials. At other times, a nationwide electronic bibliographic utility (OCLC FirstSearch) is utilized to discover who owns the material and to request that it be loaned to our circuit. We often rely on established professional contacts to ensure timely response to interlibrary loan requests.
- **Depository Library Program-** The government documents librarian coordinates the

depository library program. This is a mechanism whereby the library receives certain government documents directly from the Government Printing Office as they are published. Administering this program includes selecting titles (we are a selective depository), receiving and cataloging them, and participating in bi-annual depository inspections and annual self-studies. As the GPO moves aggressively into electronic publishing, it is the library's responsibility to ensure that we are ready to provide meaningful access to the information, no matter in what medium it is delivered. To that end, the library adds links to the electronic versions of government documents through the online catalog.

- **Circulation-** Public services staff and satellite libraries are also responsible for circulating library materials to court staff and tracking usage statistics for material used both in the library and checked out to chambers. This is accomplished through the circulation module of the Integrated Library system. Each day we scan those books that have been used by patrons in the library as well as those that have been checked out to chambers. We can then generate reports that show what materials are most used and by which types of patrons. We also track those materials used by librarians to answer reference questions.
- **Archives and Court History-** Both headquarters and satellite librarians are involved in the accumulation and conservation of court historical information. We conduct and gather existing oral and video histories of fifth circuit judges as well as senior district judges. Marian Drey, the Shreveport satellite librarian, coordinates the archive program and specifically administers the ongoing video-history project for senior judges. Librarians collect, store, and index documents, photographs, and court ephemera. We provide judges with advice on locating repositories for their papers. We also create and maintain clipping files of court-related newspaper stories. The library now scans archived material, creating digital images for the purpose of both preservation and distribution. This digitized material is organized and accessed via Hyperion, a module of the integrated library system and can be accessed from the library's intranet site.
- **Collection Maintenance and Space Planning-** The public services and satellite staff are responsible for ensuring that all material on library shelves is current and properly filed. Satellite librarians sometimes file materials in chambers. As collections grow, shifting and weeding are also important to collection maintenance. The librarians provide space planning advice for existing collections and help judges and other court employees design new space when courthouse construction or renovation projects occur. Librarians plan and coordinate moves of chamber and satellite libraries to a new space or building. This involves surveying the collection, labeling the existing and new shelving, and being physically present for the move. We try to have staff at both ends for a move. Librarians also assist in closing down chamber libraries when judges pass away or retire. This usually requires advising on the disposal or transfer of library material. The inverse is true for newly appointed judges; librarians advise on how to set up the chambers library for most effective use of materials.
- **Training-** The public services and satellite librarians provide training for court personnel

in several ways. Each year law clerk orientation is conducted at courthouses for incoming clerks. Librarians participate in these programs, whether conducted at the circuit or district court level. As mentioned above, librarians also train users in Westlaw, Lexis, and other internet resources. Satellite librarians often participate in district training programs. For example, the Beaumont librarian recently presented public records training for all the probation officers in the Eastern District of Texas. Library staff can also research outside training programs or speakers and make recommendations on training materials. Most recently the New Orleans library, in coordination with the Fifth Circuit Bar Association, is organizing CLE programs for staff attorneys, law clerks, and the local bar. The library also downloads continuing education programs from the Federal Judicial Center and provides on-demand streaming via the intranet site.

Technical Services

Types of Technical Services Provided

- **Acquisitions-** Lawbook acquisitions for the entire circuit. This means preparing purchase orders for new titles and existing subscriptions for the 219 judicial officers, 11 libraries, and all other court offices. This process has been decentralized to our circuit since 1994, when we piloted decentralized lawbook ordering. The tech services staff processed over 2800 lawbook purchase orders last year. The tech services staff also works with satellite librarians to set up libraries for newly appointed judges, coordinating needs with available funding and space. Satellite librarians forward requests for new materials to headquarters; all paperwork is prepared centrally.
- **Integrated Library System (ILS)-** The library procures lawbooks using SIRSI, an Integrated Library System. All federal court libraries use SIRSI as a lawbook management tool. The ILS consists of several integrated modules. Our library currently uses the acquisitions module to procure materials and the serials module to check in and claim materials. The online catalog of all headquarters and satellite holdings is available via a browser interface on the library's intranet site. The catalog can be searched for title, author, subject, or full text information. It is also possible to view the online catalog of every federal court library via the browser interface. The library catalog is also available to non-court users via the library's internet home page.
- **Managing the Lawbook Budget.** This year we have received over \$3.3 million to pay for new titles and continuing subscriptions throughout the circuit. This funding covers all judicial officers and court staff as enumerated earlier. We also process lawbook orders for the federal public defenders' offices. While they have their own budgets, we do all the paperwork and also manage their lawbook budgets.
- **Collection Development-** The entire library staff identifies areas of the collection to be enhanced. They choose appropriate titles, investigate and compare costs, and compare alternative formats. This can mean evaluating whether a monograph, looseleaf, or electronic source would be the appropriate medium. The staff also advises other court units on availability of new editions and titles. The library's official collection development policy can be viewed on the home page.

- **Inventory Control-** The headquarters technical services staff creates and maintains inventory records for all libraries, chambers, and court offices. This includes coordinating all transfers, cancellations, and address changes. Annually we prepare a report for each office listing the existing titles and their continuation cost. This exercise helps customers to analyze their collection and decide if they want to cancel anything. It has helped us to stay well within our lawbook budget each year, despite budget cuts and double digit price hikes. The satellite librarians coordinate this annual analysis within their service area.
- **Excessing Lawbooks-** There are always unneeded, often outdated lawbooks throughout the circuit. Sometime a judge dies, leaving a collection; or space considerations may mean that old books need to be removed to make way for newer ones. The tech services staff or satellite librarian tries to find a place for these materials within the court family. If that is not possible, materials are sold and the proceeds returned to the lawbook fund. Excessed or transferred materials are also a low-cost option to provide books for new judges. The complete disposal procedures are part of the collection development policy.
- **Cataloging-** The headquarters technical services staff maintains the online catalog for the whole circuit's holdings- libraries, chambers, and other offices. All cataloging for satellite libraries is performed centrally in New Orleans, using the integrated library system. The online catalog is now available circuit-wide via the intranet. The online only reflects the libraries' holding; judges' holdings are shadowed from general viewing in the interest of privacy.
- **Automation and Systems Support-** The integrated library system, while essentially a turn-key product, requires regular customization, maintenance, and support. This is accomplished by the library systems manager, in conjunction with the circuit automation department.
- **Serials Control-** The headquarters tech services staff and satellite librarians check in each book, advance sheet, pocket part, looseleaf release, and law review. This ensures there are no gaps and that any missing material can be claimed. This process has been automated with implementation of the ILS serials module. The tech services staff also handles subscription problems and missing issues for chambers and courts that are not directly served by a satellite library.
- **Bindery-** This department also coordinates the binding of law reviews and other periodicals for the headquarters library and judges who require binding services. Satellite librarians coordinate the binding for their individual library as well as the judges in their service area.

Satellite Libraries

There are ten satellite libraries located throughout the circuit.

LOUISIANA

Baton Rouge- Serving the Middle District of Louisiana.

Lafayette- Serving Lafayette, Opelousas, and Lake Charles in the Western District of Louisiana.
Shreveport- Serving Shreveport, Alexandria, Monroe in the Western District of Louisiana, and assisting customers in Texarkana and Marshall in the Eastern District of Texas. Supervises Fifth Circuit archives.

MISSISSIPPI

Gulfport- Serving Gulfport and Hattiesburg in the Southern District of Mississippi.
Jackson- Serving Jackson and Natchez in the Southern District of Mississippi, and the entire Northern District of Mississippi.

TEXAS

Austin- Serving Austin and Waco in the Western District of Texas; Amarillo, Lubbock and Wichita Falls in the Northern District of Texas
Brownsville- Serving the cities of Brownsville, McAllen, Laredo, and Corpus Christi in the Southern district of Texas.
Beaumont- Serving all cities in the Eastern District of Texas.
Houston- Serving the cities of Houston and Galveston in the Southern District of Texas.
San Antonio- Serving San Antonio, Pecos, Del Rio, Midland, and El Paso in the Western District of Texas.

Each library has a library judge to assist in policy setting and liaison with the local court and bar. If there is not a resident circuit judge, then the chief judge of the district chooses a district judge to serve as library judge. One of the policies decided locally is whether or not the satellite library is open to the general public. Those open to the general public include Houston, Lafayette, and Brownsville. All satellite libraries are usually available to local attorneys with cases before the court. Whether or not to file in chambers is another policy that is decided in partnership with the local library judge.

Additional satellite libraries can be established in any location with six or more judges (including senior and magistrate judges). Usually, judges in a courthouse or district request that a satellite library be established in their area. After evaluation, the Circuit Librarian then brings that request to the Judicial Council for approval. In 1994, the Council developed guidelines for establishing new satellite libraries. Generally, the Council believes that the value of a satellite library resides in the presence of the librarian, not the facility itself. As automation increasingly impacts information retrieval, the need for a large physical plant diminishes. It is recommended that newly constructed satellite libraries in the Fifth Circuit not exceed 2500 sq. ft. in area. This contrasts with the *U.S. Courts Design Guide (12/19/97)* which recommends 4000 sq. ft. for an average satellite library.

It is our policy to have only one staff member in each satellite library. The exception to the rule is the Houston library, which has a staff of 3.5. The Houston library serves a large number of judicial officers as well as being open to the public. To compare, other circuits generally staff their satellites with two people; one librarian and one library technician. Having only one librarian in each satellite is another way we are able to operate efficiently and under budget.

Chambers Collections

The library is responsible for purchasing titles and maintaining subscriptions for all research materials for chambers, libraries, clerks, staff attorneys, probation, pretrial, and federal public defenders. Funding for lawbooks is allotted annually to the library in one lump sum. This annual allotment pays for any new titles as well as existing subscriptions. Each federal public defender

has a separate lawbook fund; the library manages this funding for the FPD's.

The Judicial Conference of the United States has issued guidelines for appropriate research materials in chambers. The library committee of the Fifth Circuit Judicial Council has also recommended appropriate chamber collections. These guidelines list titles that judges may request for their chambers collections, based on available access to a staffed library facility. When a new judge is appointed, the library staff works closely with the appointee, creating a list of what research materials are needed in chambers, taking into account available space as well as budget and guideline restrictions. Sometimes we are able to transfer in materials from other chambers or purchase slightly used books at a substantial savings. The purchase and out-year renewal costs for each new chamber collection is absorbed into the annual lawbook allotment.

Yearly each office receives a list of annually renewed titles, along with the associated costs of those items. This is an opportunity for the judge to decide what materials are no longer necessary and what additional materials may be required. Any requests for additional titles are processed through the library. Decisions to purchase are based on existing resources, available funding, and Judicial Conference Guidelines.

What will the future bring?

This is currently the most pondered and analyzed aspect of librarianship, not just court librarianship or law librarianship, but all libraries. It's a common supposition; everything will be on the computer, won't it? So why will we need librarians? The proper answer, of course, is that almost everything is *already* available via the computer. But good luck finding it in a timely and precise manner. That's why we need and will always need librarians.

Where we have been

A little backtracking is probably in order. For the past twenty-five years or so, as new ways to perform research developed, the library has kept pace. Indeed, the library was usually the first place a new technology appeared. We were the first with CALR, the first court unit to have a desktop computer, the first to try cd-roms, and the first to access the internet for research. But these new technologies have been added as additional layers. Up to now, nothing has been taken away. With each new layer has come additional training issues, interface questions, and a need to understand which source is best for specific reference needs. The librarian has become a sort of "information traffic controller," knowing where all the sources are and which one is appropriate. We are no longer only the custodians of the information, we have become information retrieval specialists.

Where we are now

The question we are now faced with is when to start removing some of the layers, more specifically books. We are already moving in this direction.

- The three latest courthouse designs, Austin, El Paso, and Jackson, all provide for smaller chamber libraries and a collection-appropriate satellite library space. Judges are deciding what books they can comfortably do without.
- We currently have national contracts to several digital collections that are available to court users via a browser interface. These products provide the actual digital image of materials, be it law reviews, Congressional and other government documents, or national newspapers. End users are more likely to use electronic information that has the same look and feel of the paper.
- We continue to push more information to chambers' desktops in an effort to anticipate information needs. The library publishes an electronic newsletter that can be tailored to

individual interests, and our web site's blog always highlights the latest developments.

- An analysis of Westlaw and Lexis usage indicates that 70% of monthly usage in chambers consists of finding and printing a case. In other words, we are using CALR in place of the case reporters. Consequently, many judges are now choosing to cancel subscriptions to case reporters in chambers, and reporters aren't purchased for newly appointed judges. Generally, information that is presented in a non-linear form such as cases in a reporter volume is easily transitioned to an electronic medium. More linear presentations of information, such as is found in treatises and collections of statutes, will likely be retained in book form for some time to come, although as the vendors' presentation of statutory information improves, shelf copies of those will also disappear.

Where we are going

- The role of "information traffic controller" will grow. The number of information sources and formats will continue to increase exponentially. Judges and their staff want to spend their time deciding cases instead of keeping track of all the possible places to look for information. That is now and will continue to be the librarian's role, and we hope to increase effective communication through push technologies.
- Our role as court archivist will expand as we are able to not only collect and preserve information, but also provide electronic access to it. Our long term goal is to provide energize local legal communities toward the creation of a Fifth Circuit Historical Society.
- Librarians will continue to develop the role of interface designer. As the court places more information on the internet and intranet, the librarian will continue as content and retrieval specialist. We are experts in how people look for things; it is only logical that we design the interfaces that alert users to the availability of material and help them get what they need.
- We will continue to plan library spaces that are flexible and digital friendly. We will build library collections carefully, not limiting them to one or two formats, considering foremost the accuracy, speed and authority of each source. As always, we will work closely with judges, clerks of courts, and other court staff to meet and anticipate their needs, focusing on the digital delivery of requested information.

In short, we will continue to use all available technology and brainpower to deliver quality, timely, and cost-effective library services to the court family.